

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND
JANICE K. HAHN

June 26, 2018

Legal Action for Migrant Children and Families

Since early May, more than 2,300 children have been separated from their parents at the U.S. – Mexico border. According to the United Nations, “Detention of children is punitive, severely hampers their development, and in some cases may amount to torture. . . .” Other experts have declared President Trump’s separation policy a form of child abuse, as children are housed in cages, untouched by their so-called caregivers and exposed to toxic stress due to the confinement. For the parents, the harm is similarly distressing. *The New York Times* has reported that one Guatemalan mother explained she felt she was going to die because she could not see her daughter or hold her. Parents do not know how to find their children and do not even know where their children are placed.

In response to these claims and public outcry across the world, President Trump issued an executive order ending his policy of parent-child separation. He further directed the U.S. Attorney General to promptly file a request with U.S. District Judge

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SOLIS	_____
RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
KUEHL	_____

Dolly Gee in the Central District of California to modify the *Flores* Settlement and allow detained migrant families to be held together. While seemingly responsive on the surface, the order maintains a zero-tolerance policy by criminalizing asylum seekers and expands the unconscionable practice of family detention. This order further creates family prisons, while failing to reunify the thousands of children kidnapped from their parents by the federal government.

Concerned Americans from across the Country have swiftly responded to this humanitarian crisis. Funds have been raised, diapers and toys have been collected, and countless individuals have come forward with an interest in fostering these children. Lawyers are anticipated to respond with an avalanche of legal action directed at the federal government. For example, Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced California will join with nine other states led by Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson in filing suit. The lawsuit will allege the Trump Administration's actions violate the U.S. Constitution, and due process rights of parents to be together with their children. As lawsuits are filed, Los Angeles County may be poised to participate as amicus or plaintiff.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct County Counsel to evaluate and make recommendations to the Board about the County's participation as amicus or plaintiff in the various lawsuits concerning the federal government's inhumane and potentially unconstitutional treatment of migrant children and their parents.

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